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Housekeepers' Chat

U. S. Department of Agriculture

Wednesday, October 30, 1929

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "How to Furnish the Nursery." From Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor. Menu and recipes from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: "Infant Care."

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"Dear Aunt Sammy," writes a radio friend, "Does the book you mentioned last week, INFANT CARE, tell how to furnish the nursery? We are at present living in a small apartment. We hope to move to a house just outside the city, before long. I shall appreciate any information you have on taking care of babies."

I am sending this correspondent a copy of INFANT CARE. It's quite a problem, to bring up a child in a city apartment. A baby may get along fairly well, in a flat or apartment, until he is two or three years old, then he needs more room. And there are always a number of stupid people in city apartments, who forget that babies have certain inalienable rights--such as the right to express themselves freely, no matter what the time of night.

Now, as to the nursery. Choose a bright, sunny room, for a child needs sunshine, just as a plant does. Like a plant, the child will droop and pine, without plenty of sunshine. Windows opening to the south, southeast, or southwest will admit the sun for many hours of the day.

Temperature must be considered, also. A very young baby, or a delicate one, requires a warmer room than one older, or more robust. For the first few weeks, keep the daytime temperature between 65 and 70 degrees. At night it may fall from 10 to 15 degrees lower, if the baby is properly dressed and protected. For older babies, the daytime temperature may be from 65 to 68 degrees, and the night from 15 to 30 degrees lower, depending on the condition of the baby. A healthy child is easily accustomed to a cold room, and not harmed by it if he is kept thoroughly warm in his crib, and protected by screens, against drafts.

How can you tell whether the baby is warm enough, on a chilly winter night? Test his feet and hands. If they are warm, and he is sleeping quietly, he's all right. If they are cold, he needs more clothing, more covers, or to be screened more completely from cold air.

Which brings us to the subject of ventilation. If the nursery has doors and windows on opposite sides of the room, a cross current is set up when they are opened, and the room is quickly filled with fresh air. When there is only one window, and the door opens into a hall, you can get a cross current by opening doors and windows of other rooms, at the same time. Sometimes, in very cold weather, it's pretty hard to keep the rooms warm enough for comfort, and yet well-aired. As far as the nursery is concerned, this must be a regular part of

the mother's daily program. Several times a day, while the baby is out of the room, open all the doors and windows for a few minutes. Let the fresh air flood every part of the room, as it will quickly do. Then close the windows and turn on the heat, before the baby is brought back.

For ventilating the nursery at night, in cold weather, cloth screens are a great convenience. Do you remember when "night air" was considered harmful? Another queer old idea that has passed into the limbo of discarded superstitions. "Night air" is apt to be more pure than day air, as a matter of fact, for it is cleaned by dew or fog of the dust stirred up in the day time.

The baby's room should be kept scrupulously clean, of course. If the house is old, paint or paper the nursery. Bare floors are easily kept clean. Linoleum may be used on old floors; it is easily cleaned. Washable rugs may be used, but heavy rugs and carpets are not suitable. When the baby is large enough to play on the floor, he may sit on a mat, or a heavy blanket, folded. A clean comfort may be used as a mat. This is most important in winter, when there are cold floor drafts.

In the book on INFANT CARE, there is a list of the important furnishings for the baby's room. The list is too long to broadcast. There are also suggestions about the baby's bed, and directions for making a dressing table.

The next question today is about toys for the baby. A timely subject, now that Christmas is so near. When you buy gifts for your own children, for nieces and nephews, or for grandchildren, remember that a baby wants to put everything in his mouth. Toys should be washable, with no sharp points or corners, to hurt the eyes. Painted articles and hairy and wooly toys are unsafe, as are also toys small enough to be swallowed, and those having loose parts, such as bells. I know it's very difficult to pass by the alluring tables of gay painted toys, fluffy wooly dogs, and so forth. It's hard for grown-ups to believe, too, that a baby would rather have a string of spools and a big pie tin than the most expensive gift ever manufactured, for the Christmas buyers.

Rubber toys, which may be washed, are excellent. Floating toys of celluloid are interesting, but the baby will bite them to pieces.

Never give a child so many toys at one time that his attention is distracted. He will be quite satisfied with a few things. A handful of clothespins, for example, will please him just as much as an expensive doll, or other toy. Some mothers have a special box or basket, in which to keep empty spools and other household objects which will amuse the baby. Among these toys are a string of spools, a spoon, a pie tin to pound, a string of wooden beads, and empty talcum powder cans.

Well--this is a fascinating subject--and I see right now there'll be no menu, unless I pull myself away from the nursery.

It's a good dinner, too, planned with the children in mind. But if the Menu Specialist thinks this meal is going to be limited to children, she's mistaken. It's just what I'm going to serve tonight--and if Billy likes this meal any better than Uncle Ebenezer does--I miss my guess. I have the easiest family to cook for--they never complain about my meals. Do you suppose that's because I use the Menu Specialist's suggestions?

Here's the menu for today: Scalloped Liver and Potatoes; Stewed Tomatoes and Celery; Toasted Rolls; and Salad.

Please write the recipe for Scalloped Liver and Potatoes---it's one of these extra-good ones! Seven ingredients, for Scalloped Liver and Potatoes:

1 pound liver, sliced thin
Salt
Flour
2 tablespoons bacon fat

1 quart thinly sliced potatoes
1 small onion, minced, and
1-1/2 cups milk

Seven ingredients. I'll repeat them. (Repeat)

Salt and flour the liver and brown lightly in the bacon fat. Place a layer of the raw potatoes in a greased baking dish, sprinkle with salt, add some of the liver and onion, and continue until all are used. The top layer should be of potatoes. Pour the milk over the contents of the baking dish, cover, and cook for 1 hour, or until the potatoes are tender. At the last remove the cover and allow the potatoes to brown on top.

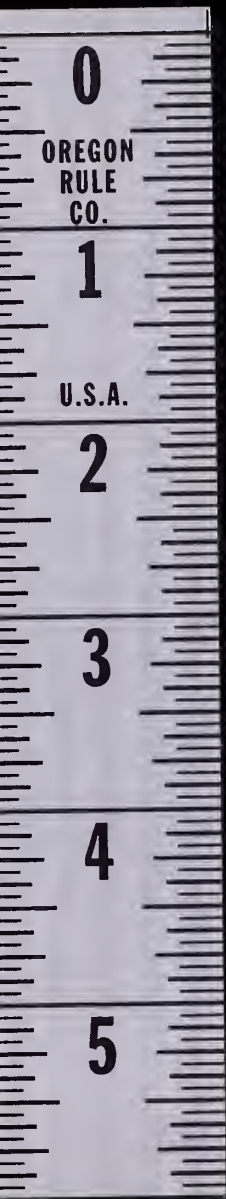
The tomatoes and celery are to be cooked together--a very appetizing dish.

The salad is made of apples, carrots, and raisins, on crisp lettuce. Dice the apples, that is, cut them into very small pieces; cut the raw carrots into long slivers, and use seedless raisins, washed in hot water to make them plump. Allow the raisins to dry off, before you combine them with the apples and carrots. Serve on a crisp lettuce leaf.

I wish I had time to tell you why this is a good meal for children--liver, potatoes, lots of vegetables, two fruits--but then, maybe they'll enjoy it just as much, not knowing why it's "good for them."

To repeat the menu: Scalloped Liver and Potatoes; Stewed Tomatoes and Celery; Toasted Rolls; and Salad.

Thursday: "Removing Common Stains."



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How to furnish the nursery.

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